



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING
Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

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FREDERICK COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

August 4, 2021

Address: 3513 Urbana Pike, Urbana

Meeting Date: August 4, 2021

Applicant: Don Holmes

Report Date: July 15, 2021

Case No.: COA 21-04

Staff: Amanda Whitmore

Proposal: Brick Replacement

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Smith's Store and Residence is listed on the County Register of Historic Properties (CR # 99-02). The property includes the entire parcel which includes one historic structure. The structure was built in 1830 in three sections as a combined dwelling and store. The property is accessed from Urbana Pike.



Fig. 1: Subject property.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to replace approximately 25-35 deteriorated and damaged bricks at the subject property with bricks similar in texture, dimension, and color. The applicant has stated that these bricks are chipped or broken.



Fig. 2: Image provided by applicant illustrating the damaged brick

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations within a designated County Register property several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the *Frederick County Historic Preservation Code: Chapter 1-23*, the *Frederick County Register of Historic Places Design Guidelines (Guidelines)*, and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

Frederick County Code: Chapter 1-23-7B

- (1) In reviewing applications, the Commission shall give consideration to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the landmark, site, or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area; the relationship of the exterior architectural features of a landmark or structure to the remainder of the landmark or structure and to the surrounding area; the general compatibility of proposed exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials to the landmark, site, or structure and to the surrounding area; and any other factors including aesthetic factors which the Commission deems to be pertinent.
- (2) The Commission shall consider only exterior features of a landmark or structure and shall not consider any interior arrangements.

- (3) The Commission shall not disapprove an application except with respect to the several factors specified in paragraph (1) above.
- (4) The Commission shall be strict in its judgment of plans for sites or structures determined by research to be of historic, archeological, or architectural significance. The Commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for sites or structures of little historic, archeological, or architectural significance, or of plans involving new construction, unless in the Commission's judgment such plans would seriously impair the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of surrounding sites or structures. The Commission is not required to limit construction, reconstruction, or alteration to the architectural style of any one (1) period.

Frederick County Register of Historic Places Design Guidelines

The *Guidelines* contain an Exterior Walls, Masonry section (Chapter 4-E.3) that should be referred to when reviewing this COA application. This section of the guidelines provides the following:

Brick: Brick bonds and other brick detailing are important character-defining features that should be retained.

Mortar: In repointing and repairing historic masonry, it is critical to identify the correct mortar mixture that is compatible with the masonry as well as the original mortar. Using mortar that is too rich in Portland cement on historic masonry can lead to the deterioration of the masonry unit. The mortar mixture should always be more permeable and softer than the masonry units.

Selecting a Mortar Mixture: Pre-blended masonry cement that is available at most hardware stores is generally not recommended for historic masonry as it contains a large amount of Portland cement. A lime based mortar is recommended. Refer to *Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings* (National Park Service October 1998).

Masonry Cleaning and Repairs: Only deteriorated joints should be repointed rather than the whole wall surface. Unsound mortar should be carefully removed to a one-inch depth, preferably by hand, to avoid damaging masonry units. The replacement mortar should be chemically compatible with the historic masonry and the original mortar mix; it should match the original mortar in color, texture, width, and tooling. The color of the new mortar shall match the existing mortar using sand or added tints.

Patching can be done to repair lightly spalling masonry, but more severe damage will require replacing the masonry units in-kind. The replacement brick or stone should be carefully chosen to match the existing in color, size, and texture; the replacement brick should not be stronger than the original.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The *Standards* define rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” The *Standards* that are most applicable to the application before the Commission are as follows:

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

STAFF DISCUSSION

The applicant proposes to replace 25-35 bricks located on the exterior walls. Approximately 16 bricks need replaced on the façade, three on the north elevation, 15 on the rear elevation, and one on the south elevation. The bricks are chipped or broken. The applicant attributes the damage to the façade bricks to years of road snow removal and salting. The brick replacement will require new mortar to be installed around the replaced bricks.



Fig. 3: Photograph of subject property's south elevation in the mid-1980's

The structure consists of a two-story brick residence on the north attached to a one-and-a-half-story brick store on the south. A rear two-story wing extends from the residence to

the northeast. The brick is laid in a common bond pattern with flush mortar joints. Review of the County Register nomination materials reveals that the south elevation wall was completely rebuilt in the 1980's. Concrete block now forms the structure of the south wall with salvaged brick on the exterior. The applicant was approved by the Commission shortly after designation in 1999 to repoint sections of the building on the northwest and northeast elevations (COA #99-01).

The applicant proposes to replace the chipped and damaged bricks with bricks similar in texture, dimension, and color. The applicant has been referred to the National Park Service's *Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings* and to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines* regarding recommended masonry repairs.

Due to the deterioration of the brick, Staff finds that removing the deteriorating brick and surrounding mortar will not adversely impact the historic character of the structure so long as the Standards for Treatment are followed. Staff further finds that the replacement of the damaged bricks with bricks that match the existing in color, size, and texture and repointing work that matches the original mortar in color, texture, width, and tooling is appropriate and compatible with the subject property and that the project will not alter character-defining features of the subject property. Additionally, staff finds that the project is appropriate under 1-23-7(B)(1), the Guidelines, and Standards #2 and #6.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission **approve** COA #21-04 under the criteria for Application Review in Chapter 1-23-7(B) (1) having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource, is compatible in character to the landmark and the surrounding area, and is appropriate under the Guidelines and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* #2 and #6. Included with the approval is the general condition that the applicant will notify the Historic Preservation Planner if they propose to make any alterations to the approved plans.